

Right Web

Exposing the architecture of power that's changing our world

Profile



NumbersUSA

Right Web connections:

- **Center for Immigration Studies**
<http://rightweb.irc-online.org/org/cis.php>
- **Federation for American Immigration Reform**
<http://rightweb.irc-online.org/org/fair.php>
- **Immigration Reform Caucus**
<http://rightweb.irc-online.org/org/irc.php>
- **ProEnglish**
<http://rightweb.irc-online.org/org/proenglish.php>
- **Social Contract Press**
<http://rightweb.irc-online.org/org/scp.php>
- **John Tanton**
<http://rightweb.irc-online.org/ind/taanton/taanton.php>

Overview

Founded in 1997, NumbersUSA states that it is a "non-profit, non-partisan, public policy organization that favors an environmentally sustainable and economically just America." The organization "opposes efforts to use federal immigration policies to force mass U.S. population growth and to depress wages of vulnerable workers. NumbersUSA.com is pro-environment, pro-worker, pro-liberty, and pro-immigrant. Activists in the NumbersUSA.com network are Americans of all races and include many immigrants and the spouses, children, and parents of immigrants." NumbersUSA advises those who want to use a

short, descriptive modifier to refer to it should use "immigration-reduction organization." (1)

Its stated goals are two-fold: 1) to examine numerical levels of annual legal and illegal immigration; and 2) to educate the public about immigration-reduction recommendations from two national commissions of the 1990s, namely The U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform (headed by Barbara Jordan) and the report of the President's Council on Sustainable Development—both of which recommended reducing immigration flows.

The executive director is Roy Beck, a former journalist who has become one of the leading voices for immigration restrictions. Board members include Tom McOwen and C. Gary Gerst. Rosemary Jenks is director of government relations. NumbersUSA had a \$1.5 million budget in its fiscal year 2005.

Origins and Impact

While the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and the Center for Immigration Studies are the most prominent immigration restrictionist organizations, NumbersUSA has gained increasing prominence as a strong national advocate for tougher immigration laws. NumbersUSA, which shares offices with ProEnglish and Evangelicals for Immigration Reform, is directed by Roy Beck, who has published books and articles about the pressing need to reduce legal and illegal immigration.

NumbersUSA has close ties with other restrictionist organizations in which John Tanton of Social Contract Press has played a key role. Roy Beck founded NumbersUSA as a project under the non-profit umbrella of U.S. Inc., an organization established by Tanton to spawn several dozen national, regional, and local groups dealing with immigration, language, culture, environmental preservation and education, and population. According to Roy Beck, although NumbersUSA does rent office space to ProEnglish, "we don't deal with language as one of our issues" and "don't have any ties with any language organization." Beck says that U.S. Inc. never funded

NumbersUSA, and he disputes the conclusion by the Southern Poverty Law Center that Tanton played a founding role in NumbersUSA, although he appreciates "John Tanton's hospitality and nurture." (5) (7)

NumbersUSA was established a year after the release of Beck's book *The Case Against Immigration*, which focused on the adverse impact of immigrants on U.S. workers and unions. NumbersUSA says the book highlights the "disastrous consequences of immigration not only for the coastal cities but for interior towns." The book makes a labor-based case for immigration restriction. According to NumbersUSA, "The 500% increase in immigration numbers has played an integral part in destroying middle-class occupations and turning them into minimum-wage jobs." The book describes many occupations where this has happened. It gives special attention to the way the immigration policy of Congress has reduced economic opportunity for black Americans, deepened the poverty of farm workers, destroyed the health of poultry plant employees, and turned many construction, manufacturing, and service jobs into "work Americans won't do." (2)

NumbersUSA is closely associated with the Coalition for the Future American Worker. Both organizations oppose visas for high-tech immigrant workers. NumbersUSA charges that the new pro-immigrant policies adopted by the AFL-CIO under President John Sweeney and by other U.S. labor unions that organize immigrant workers are hurting U.S. workers but are providing a short-term boost to organized labor.

NumbersUSA is a leading voice among those who argue that immigration is a major environmental threat to the United States. The organization together with the Center for Immigration Studies

has published a series of reports attributing population growth as the leading cause of sprawl in the United States. Such studies as *Sprawl in California*, written by Beck and NumbersUSA staff member Leon Kolankiewicz, link urban sprawl to immigration by noting that immigration constitutes the major source of population increases in the United States. Yet this causal argument downplays the fact that immigrants

According to Roy Beck, although NumbersUSA does rent office space to ProEnglish, "we don't deal with language as one of our issues" and "don't have any ties with any language organization."

generally settle in city centers, contributing to urban revitalization, not to sprawl. Instead, Numbers USA and the Center for Immigration Studies directly challenge the hypothesis that U.S. natives are the main culprits in urban sprawl: That hypothesis is challenged by the four primary ways that population growth from immigration causes sprawl: 1) Direct settlement by immigrants in the suburbs; 2) High fertility creates larger second generation of households, and children of immigrants desert urban cores by higher margins; 3) Immigrants facilitate movement of natives to outer edges; 4) Natives flee immigrant concentrations." (2)

According to *Outsmarting Smart Growth*, a joint NumbersUSA-Center for Immigration Studies

report, "there are three sources of our national population growth-native fertility (in conjunction with increasing life spans), immigration, and immigrant fertility. We know this about their contribution to long-term growth: Native fertility remains well below replacement level and has not been a source of long-term U.S. population growth since 1971. Immigration and immigrant fertility (births to foreign-born mothers), on the other hand, are far above replacement."

In other reports, such as *Forsaking Fundamentals: The Environmental Establishment Abandons U.S. Population Stabilization*, Beck bemoans the fact that environmentalists no longer focus on ending U.S. population growth. In keeping with the argument that population growth remains a major factor in U.S. environmental degradation, Roy Beck argues in this report that was published by the Center for Immigration Studies that population growth is "the neglected dimension of

America's persistent energy/environmental problems. The underlying message is that the United States could address such related problems as traffic congestion, high energy prices, pollution, and oil-related wars if it only shut off the main source of population growth.

Among the organizations closely associated with Beck and NumbersUSA are Social Contract Press (which publishes and distributes books by Beck, who serves as Washington editor for *Social Contract* magazine), Center for Immigration Studies, Coalition for the Future American Worker, Evangelicals for Immigration Reform, ProEnglish, and Midwest Coalition for Immigration Reform.

NumbersUSA's staff lobbyist Rosemary Jenks provides regular legislative assistance to the Immigration Reform Caucus chaired by Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO). Although she provides regular legislative counsel to the restrictionist caucus, Jenks is not employed by the caucus but is paid entirely through NumbersUSA. (6) (7)

Like other high-profile restrictionist organizations, NumbersUSA

explicitly disassociates itself from the type of nativist and racist immigration bashing of many local anti-immigrant organizations. According to Beck, "Nothing about this website should be construed as advocating hostile actions or feelings toward immigrant Americans. Even illegal aliens deserve humane treatment as they are detected, detained, and deported." Moreover, according to Beck, "not only is it ethically wrong to engage in such stereotyping, it is tactically short-sighted. There is much to suggest that most immigrants already among us would support

reductions in immigration numbers. The reasons are not surprising. Virtually any reduction would be even more beneficial to foreign-born Americans."

Beck also rejects having NumbersUSA associated with the political right. He says: "Even though most reviews of my book have described me and my work as liberal, I have sought to create an organization that is not just liberal or environmentalist but crosses all parts of the political spectrum." (7)

While Beck and NumbersUSA are careful not to appeal directly to racist or nativist sentiments, they do support harsh treatment of illegal

Roy Beck argues ... that population growth is "the neglected dimension of America's persistent energy/environmental problems. The underlying message is that the United States could address such related problems as traffic congestion, high energy prices, pollution, and oil-related wars if it only shut off the main source of population growth."

immigrants, including speedy deportations and sharply reducing access to political asylum and judicial hearings. In Beck's May 15, 2000 statement to the Immigration and Claims Subcommittee of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee, Beck said NumbersUSA supports "the apprehension and finger-printing of every possible illegal alien, even if there aren't enough resources to deport most of them. This will not only be disruptive to their communities-especially if people are randomly pulled from the pool to go through the swift deportation system-but it will kick in the 10-year exclusion rule on them, preventing them from benefiting from any legal access in the United States." (4)

Sources

(1) NumbersUSA
www.numbersusa.com/index

(2) <http://www.numbersusa.com/about/books.html>

(3) Roy Beck, Leon Kolankiewicz, and Steven Camarota, *Outsmarting Smart Growth: Population Growth, Immigration, and the Problem of Sprawl*, Center for Immigration Studies, August 2003.
<http://www.cis.org/articles/2003/SprawlPolicy82603.html#Federal>

(4) Statement of Roy Beck, May 15, 2000
www.nbpc.net/news/gen/beck.html

(5) "The Network," Tolerance.org
www.tolerance.org/news/article_hate.jsp?id=557

(6) "Defending Immigrants," An Interview with Rick Swartz, Southern Poverty Law Center
www.splcenter.org/intel/intelreport/article.jsp?aid=91

(7) Email communication with Roy Beck, August 22, 2005.

Looking for a way to support efforts aimed at heightening public awareness of the outrageous policies advocated by the right?

Then support the IRC's Right Web program.

You can mail your donation, donate securely online at: <http://www.irc-online.org/donate.php>, or call us at 505-388-0208. Thank you.

Published by the Right Web of the International Relations Center (IRC, online at www.irc-online.org). ©2005. All rights reserved.

The Right Web

"Exposing the architecture of power that's changing our world"

Founded in 1979, the IRC is a nonprofit policy studies center whose overarching goal is to help forge a new global affairs agenda for the U.S. government and people—one that makes the United States a more responsible global leader and partner. For more information, visit rightweb.irc-online.org or email rightweb@irc-online.org.

Recommended citation:

"NumbersUSA," Right Web Profiles (Silver City, NM: International Relations Center, October 2005).

Web location:

<http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/1528>

Production Information:

Editor: Tom Barry, IRC

Layout: Chellee Chase-Saiz, IRC